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**SECTION:** CERTIFICATION

**SUBJECT:** Eligibility Requirement

**ITEM:** *Category*

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**Policy**

To be eligible for program benefits, applicants must qualify for one of the following categories at the time of certification:

1. Pregnant (prenatal) women: Women with one or more embryos in utero.
2. Breastfeeding women: Women up to one year postpartum who are breastfeeding their infant. A woman is presumed to be breastfeeding if she breastfeeds her infant(s) on the average of at least once per day. An *exclusively breastfeeding* woman is defined as a breastfeeding woman whose infant is not receiving any WIC formula.
3. Postpartum (nonbreastfeeding) women: Women up to six months after termination of pregnancy (i.e., live birth, still birth, fetal death, therapeutic abortion, spontaneous abortion/miscarriage.)
4. Infants: Persons under one year of age.
5. Children: Persons who have had their first birthday but have not reached their fifth birthday.

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**Proof of category**

Proof of category is *not* required. However, local agencies are encouraged to obtain proof of age or pregnancy, e.g., birth certificate, pregnancy test results, etc., if the participant's categorical status is in question.

Obtaining proof of pregnancy test results cannot constitute a barrier to WIC participation. Local agencies should issue benefits to applicants who claim to be pregnant (assuming that all other eligibility criteria are met) but who do not have documented proof of pregnancy at the time of application. The local agency should then allow a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, for the applicant to provide the requested documentation of pregnancy. If such documentation is not provided as requested, the local agency would be justified in terminating the women's WIC participation in the middle of a certification period. Refer to WIC 280-10 for additional information about participant termination.

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